

DOWN MEMORY LANE

(The late Dr. Richard Field, who was trying to find out whether his great uncle, William Fuller, sailed out of Duxbury or some other port, asked our historian, Gershom Bradford, for some information. Here is Mr. Bradford's interesting reply.)

Dear Dr. Field -

In reply to your letter of 20 September last, relating to Captain Alexander Wadsworth's sailor who "dry nursed" the infant born aboard the Seth Sprague in 1853, and whose mother died a few days later, I give you the facts that I have to date.

The primary source of my information that appeared in the Clipper about a year ago, was Mrs. Georgiana L. Winsor Thomas (1842-1932) born and brought up in Duxbury. This lady was notably precise and reliable, hence I accepted her story as accurate and so I wrote it some 15 years ago. I then submitted it to the late Louise Wadsworth, the historically minded member of the family, for correction and suggestion. She took no exception to the name of Fuller as the nurse, nor did her sister, Mrs. Fanny Bailey.

It now develops that there are some here in Duxbury who hold that David Goodspeed (1815-1887), was the sailor whom Captain Wadsworth selected to care for the baby.

Mr. Goodspeed in 1853 was 38 years old and it would appear that a man of his seamanly ability would have certainly been a mate before that age. It is known that the mate of the Seth Sprague assisted at the delivery and should have been that mate, which is quite possible, he had an important part in the survival of Seaborn Wadsworth. However, the mate is, and was, the busiest man aboard ship and he would have had little time to devote to the child after the emergency. It is then that William Fuller is believed to have taken over.

Mrs. Thomas told me that Fuller was an expert skater and had been decorated by the Czar of Russia; also, that he had later married an actress and moved to a farm. She is now confirmed in two points of her story by the photographs you have of William Fuller wearing the medal, and one of the actress whom he married. From all I have heard of Fuller, he seems to have been the kind of handy man to be assigned a job of such gentle and devoted care. All of which is not conclusive but rather persuasive. In the meantime I hope that more information will be uncovered relating to this, not too important but interesting, matter.

Miss Sara Paulding's reminiscence of Duxbury school days of long ago caused memories of the little Ashdod school to come tumbling down the arches of the years. Many years have passed since that little school used to welcome the children in September.

Tucked unobtrusively among the tall pines of Ashdod, the school could easily be overlooked, and we who love her want to be sure she isn't. I remember the children who used to come the first day of school, wide-eyed and mystified, clutching at their new shiny lunch boxes. I remember the joyous peal of the bell rung by an excited lad who had had the happy thought of asking for the privilege. There were the gay walks down the woodsy lanes to gather spruce and holly to adorn the windows during the Christmas season, and how can I forget the breathless ecstasy of the first glimpse of the Christmas tree with the gingerbread boy on the topmost branch?

"Oh happy days, and now I live alone."

There were those glorious, sweet-smelling, insect-buzzing spring days; the hurriedly eaten lunches, to give the kiddies more time to play at the nearby brook where the lovely marigold grew. I remember the lad who stepped precariously on the rotted log to reach for the largest and most tempting cowslip which would soon grace the teacher's desk.

I remember the huge pine that was laid low during a storm, and the echoing shouts of glee when teacher and pupils tried to walk with arms waving the length of its trunk, only to be shaken off midway by the tugging of a branch by a mischievous boy. And the taste of those checkerberries they so laboriously used to gather during recess period, held in tight little hands to be eaten on the sly during the school session.

Then the last sad day in June when the songs we so dearly loved were sung for the last time. The teacher who watched the children trudging down the dusty lanes turning sorrowfully to lock the door.

And now, like that huge pine whose branches spread over her so protectingly during all those years, the little old school in Ashdod is too, a thing of the past.

Reminiscences

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